What Should You Do to Prepare Your Child for College?

1 Support Your Child’s Decision to Go to College
- Understand that your child will have a better future by attending college.
- Understand that your child’s priority needs to be preparing for college, which at times will compete with other family responsibilities.
- Encourage your child to participate in positive activities outside of school, such as sports teams and volunteer projects in the community.
- Allow your child the flexibility to attend school-related functions that will increase interest in college, such as field trips to college campuses.
- Consider the possibility that your child may move away from home to go to the best college possible.
- Encourage your child to visit college websites to learn about the schools’ requirements and program offerings.
- Encourage your child to visit the College Board and ACT websites. (These sites also have information for parents.)

2 Understand the Academic Requirements for University Preparation
- Accompany your child in visiting college campuses.
- Talk to and learn from other parents who have already sent their children to college.
- Ask your child about his or her career interests and the schooling required to be successful in that field.
- Find out about local summer college programs that your child can participate in.
- Understand the value of grades.
- Know your child’s Grade Point Average (GPA).
- Know what courses your child is required to take in order to apply for college.
- Enroll your child in advanced placement or honors courses, if available.
- Ask a counselor about college entrance exams, such as the PSAT, SAT, and ACT, and their importance.
Know what most colleges require for college admission:
- 4 years of English/Language Arts
- 4 years of Mathematics (beginning with Algebra I)
- 4 years of Laboratory Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, etc.)
- 4 years of Social Science (U.S. History, U.S. Government, Economics, World History, Geography, etc.)
- 2 years of each of the following: Foreign Language, Health and Physical Education, and Computer Technology
- 1 year of Fine/Practical Arts
- 1–2 years of required electives
- GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Passing the state high school exit exam
- Evidence of participation in extracurricular activities (community service, sports, clubs)

Know Where the Money Is
- Talk to your child’s high school counselor to get a good idea of how much it will cost for your child to go to college.
- Create a budget with your child that shows all the costs and all the possible sources of support.
- Ask the counselor to give you information about deadlines for financial aid and scholarships.
- Learn how to fill out the financial aid forms.
- Research organizations and companies that may offer scholarships.
- Consider the possibility of your child applying for a student loan.
- Caution your child about credit card use while in college.

Be Engaged in Your Child’s School
- Set up a meeting with the school counselor and your child’s teachers to discuss your college expectations for your child and how they will support you.
- Let your child’s teachers know that you want to meet with them whenever there are any problems.
- Ask your child’s teachers for suggestions on what you can do at home to support your child’s learning.
- Encourage the school to hold college information sessions for parents and students.

Make Your Home a Good Place to Study
- Create a space, even if small, where your child can study without being disrupted.
- Keep a lot of reading materials around the house, such as newspapers, magazines, and books. You can even start your own home library!
- Create a “family hour” every day when you talk about school and going to college, work together on homework, or read together.
- Encourage reading by bringing home reading materials that will be of interest to your child.
- Display a calendar that shows the dates of tests, reports, and projects.
- Limit the amount of time your child spends watching television, using the computer, or playing video games to one hour a day.

The Benefits of a College Education
- People with a college degree can earn 60% more than those with a high school diploma.* College graduates will earn an estimated $1 million more over their lifetime than those without a degree.†
- Most employers require at least a college degree for employment, even for an entry-level position.
- College graduates have access to better jobs and better pay, which can help improve the quality of life of the entire family.

Am I a College-Ready Parent?
- ✔ My child’s college education is a priority.
- ✔ My child is taking the right courses.
- ✔ I know the process to apply for financial aid and scholarships.
- ✔ My child’s teachers and counselor know me.
- ✔ My home offers a quiet, comfortable place for my child to study.
- ✔ If I have questions about the college admissions process, I know whom to ask.